



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 152

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2006

No. 13

Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LAMAR ALEXANDER, a Senator from the State of Tennessee.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by the Chief of Staff to the Senate Chaplain, Alan N. Keiran.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Lord God, King and Creator of the heavens and the Earth, we pause to offer our praise and thanksgiving for the joys of life. You have blessed us with friends and family, freedom and faith. You have given us religious liberty and have challenged us to seek Your eternal wisdom as we plot the course of our lives. You have blessed our Nation with praying leaders whose hearts are inclined toward You.

We ask Your blessing on all our Nation's leaders and citizens. Bless our President, our Representatives, our Senators, their families, and their staffs. May each experience a deep sense of Your love and mercy. Grant them good health, safe travel, and ample rest as they serve our great Nation.

Be with the members of our Armed Forces and their families. Grant those in harm's way the light of Your presence. Bless and protect all guardians of liberty at home and deployed. And bless all who are attending Mrs. Coretta Scott King's funeral today.

We pray in Your glorious Name.
Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable LAMAR ALEXANDER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 7, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LAMAR ALEXANDER, a Senator from the State of Tennessee, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ALEXANDER thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes. The first half of the time will be under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee, and the second half of the time will be under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. McCONNELL. As the occupant of the chair indicated, this morning, we will have a period of morning business

for up to 60 minutes, and that is equally divided.

Following that time, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 852, the asbestos bill. Yesterday, the majority leader filed cloture on the motion to proceed to the asbestos bill and that cloture vote is scheduled for 6 p.m. today.

We have a Senate delegation attending the funeral of Coretta Scott King in Georgia today. Tonight's vote at 6 will be the first vote of the day.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I ask unanimous consent that debate on the motion to proceed be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees. I further ask that the last 20 minutes be allocated as follows: The Democratic leader or his designee for 10 minutes, to be followed by the majority leader or his designee for the final 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it is our hope that we will be able to invoke cloture today and start debate on the substance of this very important piece of legislation. If cloture is invoked, I believe the chairman would be ready tonight or early tomorrow to begin work on the bill, and we can discuss the timing of that later in the day.

As the leader announced, we expect to be on the asbestos bill for the remainder of this week. We would like to make progress on asbestos-related amendments throughout this current week.

I also remind our colleagues that we will continue to work on executive nominations this week. There are a number of executive nominations on the calendar. They are ready for consideration and should be considered. Members should expect votes on those nominations as well.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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